

FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

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Washington, D. C. 20013

30 October 1980

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Editor, WALL STREET JOURNAL
22 Cortlandt Street
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[redacted]
Your 23 October editorial "The Collapsing Caribbean" contains the statement that "the administration has instructed the Foreign Broadcast Information Service not to translate press reports in Central American newspapers dealing with the Soviet-Cuban penetration"

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No such instruction has been received by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

Sincerely,

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[redacted]
Acting Director

Enclosure:

WALL STREET JOURNAL Editorial

DDS&T/AD/FBIS/ [redacted]

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23 October 1980

The Collapsing Caribbean

Reports from the Caribbean are growing increasingly ominous, and it's starting to appear we may face a major foreign policy failure there. At least in this pre-election era, the Carter administration's reaction has been to cover up the danger, even suppressing intelligence reports on the seriousness of Soviet penetration.

The Soviet projection of significant power into an area that stretches along the entire U.S. southern border has been accomplished, mainly, although by no means exclusively, through Fidel Castro, himself dependent for his continued political existence on massive Soviet military and economic aid. We now learn that Mr. Castro hand-picked the Sandinista Directorate that is tightening its control over Nicaragua. He and the Russians are funneling heavy weapons into Nicaragua to secure it as a base for further operations in Central America. According to intelligence reports, two Cuban generals, one with long experience in Soviet-Chinese overseas campaigns, are in Nicaragua directing the build-up.

A world-wide Marxist propaganda campaign is being directed at the Salvadoran government, as it tries to combat terrorist and guerrilla operations that have been escalated into full-scale warfare. There is rising evidence that the anti-government operations there are being directly aided by the Cubans, Sandinistas and the international Marxist terrorist apparatus (see the Kiracofe letter nearby).

A well-disciplined Communist force, trained abroad and directed from Havana, is operating in Costa Rica, once one of the most promising Central American democracies. Intelligence reports say that the Marxist guerrillas who are creating increasing instability in Guatemala also are operating across the border in southern Mexico. Radio Havana beams propaganda to Indians on both sides of that border in their own language as part of efforts to enlist them in the guerrilla campaign.

The Mexican government, concerned about the threat from the South and despairing of any serious U.S. resistance, has been moving rap-

idly to mend its fences with Havana and Moscow. It is supplying cut-rate oil to Nicaragua and has relieved Moscow of some of its burden of keeping Cuba in fuel.

Cuba is of course a strong Soviet base. A 3,000-man Soviet combat brigade was revealed there last year with only feeble response from the administration. Aside from the 120 planes that could provide air cover for either land or sea operations it is ludicrous to say there is no offensive capability. There are also 133 fighter-bombers, of which 48 are high-performance Flogger-type aircraft at least potentially capable of carrying nuclear weapons. There are 80 Antonov and Ilushin transports that can move large units of Cuba's 200,000-man army anywhere in the Caribbean in a matter of hours. Cuban runways have been lengthened to accommodate the potent Backfire strategic bomber. The submarine base at Cienfuegos has been expanded. The Cubans have 51 fast attack boats, some with missiles and others with torpedos, for hit-and-run raids on larger ships.

The Soviets and Cubans are content for now to build up Nicaragua as a base for guerrilla operations in Central America but Nicaragua's strategic importance in close proximity to the Panama Canal is obvious as well. Then there is little Grenada, out on the Atlantic frontier and close to oil-rich Venezuela. It too is getting a large new airfield to accommodate its Cuban-Soviet captors.

The U.S. has so far countered the Soviet threat with platitudes about human rights, using that device as a reason for denying military aid to two of the countries under attack, El Salvador and Guatemala, and thus driving them toward ever more desperate and brutal measures. This fits the Marxists' destabilization agenda beautifully and feeds their propaganda mills. Indeed, the Soviet-Cuban expansion was invited by early administration declarations that it would not use force in the Caribbean, which assured Mr. Castro he could operate with impunity so long as he was careful to toss an occasional friendly gesture Washington's way and help the State Depart-

ment assure the American public that nothing really bad is happening.

As its latest contribution, the administration has instructed the Federal Broadcast Information Service not to translate press reports in Central American newspapers dealing with the Soviet-Cuban penetration, intelligence sources say. It is desperately trying to prevent further word from leaking out about the Sandinista involvement in these operations, since the President had to certify that no such thing was happening in order to win congressional approval for the \$75 million aid package to the Nicaraguans. This package may be a worthwhile if risky gamble to keep the private sector there alive, but not if it forces us to close our eyes to the reality of what is happening throughout the Caribbean.

In particular, there is no attempt to warn the Soviets and Cubans that they are going too far. The misconceived notions that led the U.S. to its non-policy need further elaboration at a later date, but there should be no doubt that it has exposed the U.S. and its Latin American neighbors to an enormous danger.